

Claims

1. A system for providing uninterrupted viewing of a real-time program during a telephone call from a caller to a user, the system comprising:

5 a display capable of displaying caller identification information upon receipt of the call;

a controller capable of detecting acceptance and termination of the call by the user; and

10 a buffer coupled to the controller, wherein the buffer is capable of buffering the real-time program from the acceptance of the call and providing the buffered program to the user upon the termination of the call until the buffered program coincides with the real-time program.

15 2. The system of claim 1, wherein the display is coupled to the buffer and is further capable of displaying the buffered program to the user.

20 3. The system of claim 1, further comprising a video display device coupled to the buffer, wherein the video display device is capable of displaying the buffered program to the user.

4. The system of claim 1, further comprising a memory capable of storing data about the call, the data including at least one of: the caller identification information and length of the call.

25 5. The system of claim 4, wherein the buffer is further capable of buffering the program in a compressed format, the compressed format being selected based on the stored data about the call.

30 6. The system of claim 4, wherein the memory is further capable of storing a caller list, the caller list being generated based on the stored data about the call.

7. The system of claim 6, wherein the caller is included in the caller list if the stored data about the call indicates that at least a predetermined percentage of the caller's calls were accepted by the user.

8. The system of claim 6, wherein the caller identification information is displayed only if the caller is included in the caller list.

9. The system of claim 6, wherein the controller is further capable of automatically accepting the call if the caller is included in the caller list.

10. The system of claim 1, further comprising a user input device for controlling viewing of the program and for accepting and terminating the call by the user.

11. The system of claim 1, wherein the controller is further capable of automatically muting audio associated with the program upon the acceptance of the call by the user.

12. A system for providing uninterrupted viewing of a real-time program during a telephone call from a caller to a user, the system comprising:
means for displaying caller identification information upon receipt of the call;
means for detecting acceptance and termination of the call by the user; and
means for buffering the real-time program from the acceptance of the call and providing the buffered program to the user upon the termination of the call until the buffered program coincides with the real-time program.

13. A method of providing uninterrupted viewing of a real-time program during a telephone call from a caller to a user, the method comprising:
displaying caller identification information upon receipt of the call;
detecting acceptance of the call by the user;
buffering the real-time program from the acceptance of the call; and
displaying the buffered program to the user upon the termination of the call until the buffered program coincides with the real-time program.

14. The method of claim 13, further comprising storing data about the call, the data including at least one of: the caller identification information and length of the call.

15. The method of claim 14, wherein the program is buffered in a compressed format, the compressed format being selected based on the stored data about the call.

16. The method of claim 14, further comprising generating a caller list based on the stored data about the call.

17. The method of claim 16, wherein the caller is included in the caller list if the stored data about the call indicates that at least a predetermined percentage of the caller's calls were accepted by the user.

18. The method of claim 16, wherein the caller identification information is displayed only if the caller is included in the caller list.

19. The method of claim 16, further comprising automatically accepting the call if the caller is included in the caller list.

20. A computer readable medium having instructions for causing a computer to execute a method of providing uninterrupted viewing of a real-time program during a telephone call from a caller to a user, the method comprising the steps of:

displaying caller identification information upon receipt of the call;

detecting acceptance of the call by the user;

buffering the real-time program from the acceptance of the call; and

displaying the buffered program to the user upon the termination of the call until the buffered program coincides with the real-time program.

21. An integrated system for providing uninterrupted viewing of a real-time program during a telephone call from a caller to a user, the system comprising:

a display capable of displaying the program and caller identification information upon receipt of the call;

a speaker capable of providing audio output for the program and the call;

a microphone capable of accepting audio input for the call;

5 a user input device for controlling viewing of the program and for accepting and terminating the call by the user;

a controller capable of detecting acceptance and termination of the call by the user; and

10 a buffer coupled to the controller, wherein the buffer is capable of buffering the real-time program from the acceptance of the call and providing the buffered program to the display upon the termination of the call until the buffered program coincides with the real-time program.

22. An apparatus, comprising:

15 means for displaying a video input signal;

means for recording the video input signal; and

means for detecting an incoming phone call;

20 in the event said detecting means detects an incoming phone call, said recording means being capable of recording the video input signal during the phone call, and said displaying means being capable of displaying the recorded video input signal to a user upon termination of the phone call.

23. The apparatus of claim 22, wherein said recording means comprises a structure selected from the group consisting of: a set top box, a computer system, a satellite receiver, a cable receiver, an Internet television box, a network client, and a television.

24. The apparatus of claim 22, wherein said recording means is capable of initiating recording of the video input signal at a time selected from the group consisting of: upon detecting the incoming phone call, upon detecting a ring signal from the incoming phone call, upon detecting caller identification data from the incoming phone call, upon detecting an off-hook signal from the incoming phone call, upon displaying caller identification data from the

incoming phone call, upon the user selecting to answer the incoming phone call, and prior to receiving the incoming phone call.

25. The apparatus of claim 22, further comprising means for allowing a voicemail system to handle the incoming phone call in the event the user does not answer the incoming phone call.

26. The apparatus of claim 22, further comprising means for allowing a voicemail system to handle the incoming phone call in the event the user does not answer the incoming phone call, the voicemail system being disposed in a location selected from the group consisting of: integrated within said recording means, and external to said recording means.

27. The apparatus of claim 22, wherein said detecting means further comprises means for displaying caller identification data from the incoming phone call to assist the user in selecting whether to answer the incoming phone call.

28. The apparatus of claim 22, wherein said detecting means further comprises means for displaying caller identification data from the incoming phone call when the caller identification data matches a predetermined list, said caller identification data displaying means otherwise not displaying the caller identification data.

29. The apparatus of claim 22, wherein said displaying means is further capable of displaying caller identification data from the incoming phone call to assist the user in selecting whether to answer the incoming phone call.

30. The apparatus of claim 22, wherein said displaying means is further capable of displaying caller identification data from the incoming phone call when the caller identification data matches a predetermined list, said displaying means otherwise not displaying the caller identification data.